

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 IO-12 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 AID-20 RSR-01 /138 W

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R 290345 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9307

INFO USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 5141

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: DAILY MAR 3 SITREP - 28 MARCH 1973

FOLLOWING MSG REC FROM AMCONSUL BIEN HOA ACTION AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
ON MAR 28 REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEN HOA 0040

SUBJ: DAILY MR III SITREP - 28 MARCH 1973

1. WE HAVE A REPORT OF A POSSIBLE SHAKEUP IN THE HIERARCHY OF MR III WHICH WE FIND HARD TO BELIEVE. OUR SOURCE, COLONELY NGUYEN VAN CHUYEN, FORMER PROVINCE CHIEF OF LONG KHANH PROVINCE, CLAIMS THAT HE WILL BE RETURNED TO LONG KHANH AS PROVINCE CHIEF BEFORE THE MONTH IS OVER. HE TOLD US THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAD GIVEN HIM A CHOICE OF PHUOC TUY, BINH TUY OR LONG KHANH AND THAT HE HAD CHOSEN LONG KHANH TO SHOW THE PEOPLE OF THIS PROVINCE THAT HE DID NO WRONG AND THAT HIS REMOVAL WAS ENGINEERED BY GENERAL MINH.

2. COLONEL CHUYEN FEELS THAT JUSTICE HAS BEEN SERVED NOW THAT HE IS ABOUT TO BE REINSTATED. HE IS SOMEWHAT WARY ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GENERAL MINH, HOWEVER. HE MADE THE POINT THAT MINH DOES NOT LIKE HIM, AND, FOR THAT MATTER, NEVER HAS. HE FEELS THAT MINH IS ONLY A TEMPORARY PROBLEM INASMUCH AS PRESIDENT THIEU TOLD CHUYEN THAT HE WOULD BE TRANSFERRING MINH IN THREE OR FOUR  
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MONTHS.

3. COLONEL MACH VAN TRUONG, THE CURRENT PROVINCE CHIEF OF LONG KHANH, IS REPORTEDLY TELLING CONFIDANTS THAT HE WILL REPLACE GENERAL DAU AS COMMANDER OF THE 18 TH ARVN DIVISION AND THAT GENERAL DAU WILL GO TO THE JGS. TRUONG' S CLAIM THAT HE IS ABOUT TO BECOME THE COMMANDER OF THE 18 TH ARVN DIVISION IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE. HE IS A RELATIVELY YOUNG COLONEL AND IS CURRENTLY UNDER FIRE FOR CORRUPTION.

4. CHUYEN' S REPORT THAT HE WAS OFFERED PHUOC TUY SUPPORTS OUR EARLIER REPORTS THAT THE INCUMBENT, LTC TRAN DINH BIHC, WAS IN TROUBLE AND THAT HIS REMOVAL WAS IMMINENT. THE SUGGESTION THAT THE BINH TUY PROVINCE CHIEF MAY BE ON HIS WAY OUT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE TO US. COLONEL ANH IS RELATIVELY NEW AND APPEARS TO BE ON TOP OF HIS ASSIGNMENT. WE DO NOT QUESTION THE POSSIBILITY OF MINH' S TRANSFER; WE HAVE HEARD THAT MINH MAY BE LEAVING SOONER THAN THE TIMING REPORTED BY CHUYEN. SOURCES IN SAIGON TOLD US THAT THE PRESIDENT IS PLANNING TO TAP MINH FOR ONE OF THE KEY POSITIONS ON THE TPJMC.

5. SOURCES ON THE XUAN LOC ICCS TEAM CONFIRM THAT PHUOC TUY AUTHORITIES HAVE REQUESTED AN OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION OF THE RECENT FIGHTING IN BINH BA, DUC THANH DISTRICT, PHUOC TUY. HOWEVER, SOURCES STATE THAT THE ICCS WOULD TAKE NO OFFICIAL ACTION UNTIL REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE JMC. ANY " INVESTIGATION" AT THIS TIME WITHOUT JMC ACTION WOULD BE STRICTLY UNOFFICIAL AND PROBABLY NOT INVOLVE EITHER THE POLISH OR HUNGARIAN MEMBERS, SINCE THEY HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED BY THEIR HIGHER HEADQUARTERS NOT TO TAKE PART IN ANY VISIT OR INVESTIGATION WHICH DID NOT RESULT FROM JMC ACTION. SOURCES STATE THAT THE POLISH AND HUNGARIAN MEMBERS OF THE TEAM WERE CHAFING UNDER THESE RESTRICTIONS BUT HAD STRICT ORDERS NOT TO TAKE PART IN ANY FIELD TRIPS OR INVESTIGATIONS ARRANGED DIRECTLY BY THE RVN WITH THE ICCS.

6. ONE OF THE SOURCES STATED THAT A REPORT HAD BEEN SUBMITTED ON THE NGAI GIAO INCIDENT WHICH CANADIAN AND INDONESIAN MEMBERS OF THE TEAM HAD INVESTIGATED DURING AN RVN- SPONSORED FAMILIARIZATION TOUR OF DUC THANH DISTRICT. SOURCES DID NOT STATE WHAT CONCLUSION WAS DRAWN IN THE REPORTS WHICH THE TWO CONTINGENTS SENT TO THEIR HIGHER HEADQUARTERS, BUT MADE CLEAR THEIR PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT A CEASE- FIRE VIOLATION HAD TAKEN PLACE. HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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SOURCES ALSO STATED THAT IN THEIR VIEW THE ENEMY FORCES HAD NOT INTENDED TO HIT THE CIVILIAN POPULATION. THEIR OBJECTIVE, WHICH WAS BORNE OUT BY A MORTAR ATTACK A FEW DAYS LATER, WAS TO ZERO IN ON THE NEARBY DUC THANH SUB- SECTOR COMPOUND.

7. SOURCES SPECULATED THAT THE TPJMC WOULD BE FORMED AT ALL LEVELS AND WOULD PROVE TO BE EFFECTIVE SINCE BOTH SOUTH VIETNAMESE SIDES WERE TIRING OF THE FIGHTING AND WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO BLAME JMC INACTION ON THE PRESENCE OF THE

NVA AND U. S. SOURCES STATED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SHARP'S POINT THAT CONTINUED CANADIAN PRESENCE ON THE ICCS WAS CONTINGENT ON THE TPJMC BEING FORMED QUICKLY WOULD HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT.

8. SOURCES ALSO STATED THAT THEY RECEIVE DAILY REPORTS OF CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS FROM RVN OFFICIALS IN LONG KHANH AND TAKE MOST OF THESE REPORTS AT FACE VALUE SINCE THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO VERIFY SOME INCIDENTS. HOWEVER, WITHOUT JMC ACTIVITY, THE FULL ICCS COULD NOT TAKE OFFICIAL ACTION. IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUING WIDESPREAD LOW-LEVEL ENEMY ACTIVITY, SOURCES STATED THAT THEY WERE A LITTLE MYSTIFIED AND FRIGHTENED BY THE RVN'S REACTION TO THESE ATTACKS ON ITS AREA OF CONTROL. THEY FELT THAT THE RVN HAD EVERY RIGHT TO DEFEND ITS AREAS OF CONTROL AND WOULD BE PERFECTLY JUSTIFIED IN USING ITS H&I ARTILLERY TO INTERDICT INFILTRATION ROUTES THAT WERE BEING USED TO MOUNT ATTACKS ON RVN AREAS. THUS THEY FELT THE RVN WAS MAKING A STRATEGIC BLUNDER IN RELYING ON STATIC DEFENSE. THEY ALSO FELT THAT THE RVN COULD DEFEND SUCH H&I ON THE GROUNDS THAT ITS INTELLIGENCE HAD CONFIRMED THAT ATTACKS WERE CONSISTENTLY BEING MOUNTED ALONG CERTAIN INFILTRATION ROUTES.

9. THE GIA DINH PROVINCE CHIEF TELLS US THAT BARS, NIGHTCLUBS, AND DANCING WILL BE LEGAL AGAIN STARTING IN APRIL. ALSO THE PHU THO RACETRACK WILL REOPEN APRIL 1. ALL THIS IS INTENDED TO RELAX WARTIME RESTRICTIONS AND TO BRING IN MORE TAX REVENUE FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

10. COMMUNIST PROPAGANDISTS ARE TELLING PEOPLE THAT THEY ARE GOING TO TRY TO TAKE OVER CERTAIN INSECURE HAMLETS IN NHON TRACH DISTRICT (BIEN HOA). IN LONG THANH THEY'RE EVEN COCKER, ASSERTING THAT THE QUESTION OF TAKING OVER HAMLETS LIKE BEN BAO, BINH SON, SI PHUOC, AND PHUOC NGUYEN DOESN'T'S CONFIDENTIAL

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ARISE, BECAUSE THEY CAN TAKE THESE OVER ANY TIME THEY LIKE. ON MARCH 26, THE COMMUNISTS BLOCKED ROUTE 19 IN NHON TRACH DISTRICT, AND THE RVNAF FORCES HAVE NOT YET OPENED THE ROAD FROM LONG THANH DISTRICT TO BINH SON.

11. WE HAVE MORE INFORMATION ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF VOTERS BEING CARRIED ON BY RURAL DEVELOPMENT CADRE IN BIEN HOA. IN CONG THANH DISTRICT, THE RDC ESTIMATES THAT OF THE 9,601 VOTERS, 9,371 ARE CATEGORY A (PRO-RVN), 168 CATEGORY B (UNDECIDED) AND 62 CATEGORY C (PRO-COMMUNIST). DIN AN'S 16,462 VOTERS ARE CATEGORIZED AS 13,889 A, 2,015 B, 558 C; TAN UYEN'S 6,830 ARE CLASSIFIED AS 6,332 A, 341 B, 157 C. WE REGARD THESE ASSESSMENTS AS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC, THOUGH WE AGREE THAT ALL THREE DISTRICTS WOULD BE PRO-RVN IN ELECTION CONTEST AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS. IT SEEMS THAT THE RDC PREPARE THESE ESTIMATES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE VOTERS, WITHOUT ACTUALLY POLLING THEM,

AND THAT THE ESTIMATES ARE INFLATED BY THE RDC' S NEED TO PROVE THEY HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE IN HEIGHTENING THE ANTI- COMMUNIST SPIRITS OF THE PEOPLE FOR THWOM THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CADRE CANNOT GO ALL THE WAY AND CLAIM 100 PERCENT PRO- RVN, BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH OTHER OFFICIAL INFORMATION ON FAMILIES WITH RELATIVES IN THE VC, VCI AND VC SYMPATHIZERS.

12. THE DEMOCRACY PARTY INFRASTRUCTURE IN BIEN HOA WAS COMPLETED MARCH 23 WITH THE INAUGURATION OF DISTRICT AND VILLAGE CHAPTERS IN DI AN.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 IO-12 EUR-25 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 RSR-01 /138 W

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R 290345 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9308

INFO USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 5141

13. VC/ NVA FORCES SWEEPED PHUOC HOA HAMLET, PHU KHUONG DISTRICT ( TAY NINH) MARHC 27, ROUNDING UP APPROXIMATELY 1,000 CIVILIANS WORKING IN THE FIELDS AND HERDING THEM TO THIEN NGON, THE POW EXCHANGE SITE IN NORTHWESTERN TAY NINH. THE VC/ NVA WERE EXPECTING A VISIT FROM THE ICCS AND WANTED TO GIVE THE AREA UNDER THEIR CONTROL THE APPEARANCE OF BEING POPULATED. THE ICCS DIDN' T TURN UP, AND THE CAPTIVE POPULATION WAS RELEASED AT 1500 HRS TO RETURN HOME.

14. ARVN III CORPS REPORTED LIGHT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE PRECEDING 24 HOURS, WITH ONLY 10 INCIDENTS, ALL REPORTED AS VC/ NVA INITIATED ( 3 GROUND PROBES AND 7 ABFS). TONLE CHAM BASE CAMP RECEIVED OVER 150 ROUNDS OF MORTAR AND 107 MM ROCKETS IN 3 SEPARATE ATTACKS. THERE WERE NO FRIENDLY CASUALTIES. AIR DROP RESUPPLY IS DIFFICULT DUE TO ENEMY GROUND FIRE, BUT THE CAMP HAS AN ESTIMATED 10 DAYS SUPPLY OF FOOD, MEDICINE AND AMMUNITION. THE ICCS AT LAM SON HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE RVN TO NEGOTIATE A PERMANENT CEASE- FIRE AT THE LOCATION, BUT NO RESPONSE HAS BEEN RECEIVED THUS FAR.

15. THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT GROUND ENGAGEMENT IN BINH TUY PROVINCE NEAR HAM TAN WHERE THE 20 TH RF PLATOON WAS MORTARED AND THEN ATTACKED BY AN UNKNOWN SIZE VC/ NVA FORCE. THE VC LOST 5 KILLED AND THREE CAPTURED AND THERE WERE 2 PF WOUNDED. IN ADDITION, THERE WERE 4 BOOBY TRAP INCIDENTS IN THE REGION WHICH KILLED 1 AND WOUNDED 8 FRIENDLY. DAILY CASUALTY FIGURES WERE REPORTED AS 7 VC/ NVA KILLED, CONFIDENTIAL

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4 FRIENDLY KILLED AND 23 WOUNDED. NO CIVILIAN CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED. LTL 2 IN THE VICINITY OF DUC THANH, AND QL 13/14 AND 1 A TO SONG BE ARE OPEN AGAIN TO CIVILIAN TRAFFIC. WALKINSHAW BUNKER

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